

PSCAC Meeting Minutes

14 March 2007

Members Present

Charles Thomas
Len Clay
Fred Schultz
Wolfgang Mergner
Andy Kelemen
Gayle Fisher-Stewart
Fred Schultz
Darren Morgan
Ronald Ricucci (Chief TPPD)

Guest

Capt. Ed Coursey TPPD
Colleen Clay – Ward 2
Bruce Williams – Ward 3
Kathy Porter -- Mayor
Barbara Mathews – City Manager
Jessie Carpenter – City Clerk

Members Absent

Mike Israel
Buddy Daniels
Aaron Houston

This was a special “round-table” meeting of the Public Safety Citizens Advisory Committee (PSCAC) hosting members of the City Council and Administration. The purpose of the meeting was to elicit input from Council members as to the direction in which they would like to see the committee going in the coming year.

The following matters were discussed during this meeting

(Not necessarily in the order presented below; some of the topics also overlap somewhat.)

Community Oriented Policing (COP)

When the PSCAC started, it was to assist Council and police in implementing COP (or Community Policing CP as it is sometimes known). We think of this committee as the community representative of COP. COP is a philosophy that establishes a quality of life enriching relationship between police, city hall, and the community. The problem is that studies show COP as such does not “work”, because you cannot measure how well a “philosophy” is doing. Something can be said to work only if progress toward a goal can be measured. Consequently COP must be implemented as a set of strategies and programs with specific goals the progress toward each of which can be measured.

Ideas for such strategies and programs should include those coming from the people policed, including via neighborhood and resident groups. And it is essential when defining strategies and programs to define at the same time the effectiveness metrics to be used and the cost of each effort. Communication between the police and the community must be key components of the strategies and programs that make up COP. Community forums and meetings are a must. Some of the potential programs should consist of working with young people and using some form of “volunteers in policing”.

PSCAC should keep on working with the TPPD to implement the redirection of COP in the City along the lines indicated by Chief Ricucci.

Neighborhood Safety Contacts (NSC)

The Council is very interested in organizing resident groups to aid in building “community capacity”. Such capacity includes such initiatives as neighborhood watch, resident patrols and of course the NSCs. NSCs provide a real bonus that a public safety and emergency preparedness oriented group of residents can provide.

NSCs are also a key in providing a by-directional communication conduit between residents and resident organizations and the City and the TPPD. PSCAC could call meetings in the community and encourage people to come forward and be NSCs. While Buddy has been working on promoting NSCs a more energetic push is needed particularly if the faith based groups are also to be integrated in this effort.

Communication with neighborhood and resident associations

This has been a long term goal of PSCAC. It would be of great benefit if neighborhood groups had a common understanding of the issues facing the City. Among other benefits, this would also lessen the tendency of individual localities trying to or insisting on reinventing the wheel. Unfortunately there continue to be problems working with neighborhoods and local interest groups. They tend to resist “outside influence” and some have a very spotty record of holding meetings.

PSCAC suggests that the City needs to establish some minimum “credentials” or “checking of boxes” to be accepted by the City as an “official” resident organization. This may need not be more than the record of the contact person, the frequency of meetings and geographic or other boundaries established by the organization. It would be helpful if the City assigns someone take responsibility for keeping in touch with groups in neighborhoods and keep the contact list current.

PSCAC could help by calling organizational meetings in a target community - encourage people to come forward and organize. This would require considerable help from Ward representatives. PSCAC needs to communicate outside the committee.

It is easier for the City to work with organized neighborhoods.

PSCAC should also meet with the newsletter editor re strategic communication as well as initiate story ideas.

Crime statistics

Although PSCAC is not a police department oversight committee, we strongly encourage the timely publication of detailed crime statistics, including arrest and clearance data where available, by the TPPD. (TPPD oversight is provided by the City Manager and Council.) A robust, on-line Geographic Information System (GIS) can provide easily understood statistical information to the residents as well as the TPPD.

Pedestrian safety

While neighborhood patrols may not draw much interest and may not be as effective as we wish, they are still a good way for a neighborhood to keep in touch with what is going on in a local area and can provide some measure of safety for people walking home from the METRO.

Miscellaneous topics discussed briefly

There are drug sale problems in the Ward 2 neighborhood.

There is a strong interest in some form of police cadet or volunteer program, resident's academy, youth academy, and self defense for women, for men, etc.

The need for increased protection of the community from violent and property crime continues

Inadequate and non existent response to resident phone calls by various City

Departments is an ongoing issue sorely needing a remedy.

There is a benefit to letting the City Manager know of pertinent issues that are discussed on list serves.

They Mayor noted that she found this meeting useful and would like to have us repeat it.

Meeting closed 8:33

Action Items from February

Len -- will rewrite original vision statement for CP within a few weeks and **Andy** will forward it to PSCAC members for action.

Ed -- to inform the incoming Chief that PSCAC would like to meet with the Chief at his earliest opportunity.

Ed -- also to brief the incoming Chief on the Council mandated relationship between PSCAC and the TPPD.

Old Action Items

1. **Ed** -- Keep us informed of GIS progress and tell us if there are issues with which the PSCAC can assist you.
2. **All** -- "Google" to obtain information on technology grants for FY 07 so that the RMS system of the TPPD can be updated. What grants and programs are available? Who can write grants for the PD?
3. **All** -- The TASDI issue relevant to the TPPD will be coming up on the Council's agenda shortly. Keep an eye out for it; attend the session if possible.
4. **Wolfgang** will apply to be the PSCAC representative on the Safe Roadways Committee.
5. **Chuck** -- will review the old "focus group report" with a view to comparing it to where we are going. **Wolfgang** will provide Chuck with a copy. He also volunteered to take over managing the NSC lists on police side and will meet with Buddy to coordinate this effort.
6. **Fred** -- will draft letter to association chairs to reminding them to invite police participants to their meetings; to get to know each other, etc.